



ALGAO:Scotland *news*

2009

*The newsletter of the
Association of Local Government
Archaeological Officers:Scotland*



Welcome

Welcome to the second annual newsletter of ALGAO:Scotland, the association for archaeologists working for, or on behalf of, local government in Scotland. Our members carry out a wide range of tasks, from working with planning officers, to community interpretation and outreach projects, to research and conservation.

ALGAO:Scotland news is an annual review highlighting the activities of members through the year: in this edition the theme is tailoring local services to local needs...

Tailoring Local Services to Local Needs

ALGAO:Scotland represents Scottish Local Authority and National Park archaeological services and is part of the UK-wide organisation ALGAO:UK (www.algao.org.uk). While ALGAO members' interests embrace all aspects of the historic environment, including archaeology, maritime heritage, built environment and historic landscapes, each member provides services to areas which are very different in terms of landscape, population, threats and opportunities, and where local authorities accordingly have different priorities. This flexibility of approach builds on one of the main strengths of our membership: **being based locally**. Local Authority archaeologists build up a detailed picture of the archaeology in their area through case-work and research, and being part of the local community allows contacts and partnerships to develop over the years in a very positive way.

ALGAO:Scotland member services have four key areas of work that encourage the identification, recording, protection, management, interpretation and promotion of archaeological sites and monuments in their respective areas:

- **Developing community partnerships through local contacts: education and outreach, management and research projects.**
- **The provision of a local "hub" for information and advice: Sites and Monuments Records and Historic Environment Records, used as the basis of planning and conservation advice in addition to management, research and outreach and community events.**
- **Reacting rapidly to conditions for survey and monitoring: air photography; inter-tidal survey; specifying and monitoring developer-funded archaeology.**
- **Reacting rapidly to local incidents such as the unexpected discovery of human remains; metal-detecting finds; and the deliberate destruction of monuments.**

The articles in the 2009 newsletter clearly demonstrate how locally developed projects and partnerships are tailored to local needs, and also illustrate the wide range of projects and activities undertaken by member services.

Buzzing Around the Countryside...

Regional Air Survey in Aberdeenshire



The Archaeology Service of Aberdeenshire, Angus & Moray, has undertaken aerial survey over all seasons since 1977. The remains of upstanding settlements and field systems can be found in the relatively undisturbed upland areas, whereas the great arable areas of Aberdeenshire, Moray and Angus are conducive to crop mark formation. These are generally visible in cereal crops under fairly dry conditions, but their visibility is very dependent on local ground conditions and local weather patterns. Undertaking local flying means short weather windows can be used and provides the ability to book a flight at short notice, rather than requiring advanced booking. Initially flights funded by the Royal Commission were undertaken using a small fixed wing plane such as a Cessna. Today however, helicopters are now used, funded by the Council, as no light aircraft with an Air Operators Certificate are available in the area. Although more expensive to hire, and therefore fewer flights can be undertaken, they have nevertheless proved to be a very useful resource. The ability to hover over a site rather than circle means less time is spent photographing a specific site. The information gathered from these flights over the years has added considerably to our knowledge of both prehistoric and later sites. Unfortunately the rather wet conditions we have experienced over the last few summers have meant fewer new crop mark sites being recorded. However, one flight in late July 2008 over the Mearns in Aberdeenshire and the Montrose basin area of Angus recorded 18 new sites, which was exceptional given the conditions a few weeks earlier.

Moira Greig

Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/archaeology/index.asp

Although the Roman camp of Dun has been photographed many times before, the ring ditch inside it has not been previously recorded.

Insert: Moira Greig at work (© Aberdeenshire Council).



Conservation and Gardening at Coldingham Priory: Local Partnership in the Scottish Borders

In Spring of 2009, work will begin on an exciting half-million pound project running over two years and culminating in the consolidation of Coldingham Priory, Berwickshire, and the creation of a community garden. A church at Coldingham was founded by King Edgar of Scotland in 1098 and the Benedictine priory, as a dependant of Durham Cathedral, was inhabited by 1141. Recent work by Headland Archaeology, however, has supported the belief that a Christian community existed at Coldingham from the 7th century: making it one of the oldest, and longest functioning, Christian communities in Scotland. The ruins of the Priory principally date from the 13th century and owe their condition to a long history of late- and post-medieval military activity. The consolidation will see original materials, such as local stone and lime mortar, used to help preserve the Priory for generations to come. In addition to the consolidation, a communal garden will further enhance the Priory and provide members of the community and visitors to Coldingham a chance to reflect on the long history of one of Scotland's hidden treasures.

Initially envisioned as a consolidation project more than two years ago, Scottish Borders Council has since supported the Friends of Coldingham Priory and Archaeology Scotlands Adopt a Monument scheme in their efforts to create the communal garden. We also sought out the award winning NGO The Tweed Forum to assist in project managing and implementation. Funds have been raised from a number of sources including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland, Scottish Borders Council and Scottish Natural Heritage. A programme of interpretation, outreach and events will take place over the next two years.

Christopher Bowles

Archaeology Officer, Scottish Borders Council

www.scotborders.gov.uk



Partnership in Dumfries and Galloway



Dumfries and Galloway is home to 148,000 people, with the region having a low population density and many distinct communities. To the north, the Southern Uplands border the region, and to the south the glistening Solway offsets the coastline. The Council Archaeology Service, based within the Planning and Environment Service, is based in Dumfries, and has as its primary purpose the maintenance of the Sites and Monuments Record, using this information to advise on development and land use change, including forestry. The aim is to secure the best balanced result for the historic environment, and to deliver this the service has a wider role in promoting and conserving heritage. Partnership working with interest groups is essential.

The £39 million Sulwath Connections Landscape Partnership Project is run from within the Council and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and includes projects that the Archaeology Service has either generated or supports. The Conservation of Historic Churchyards Project is carrying out major works at Dalton, Minnigaff and Wigtown old churches, and lesser repair works in 3 other graveyards. Projects to improve the condition and amenity of Bruce's motte and bailey in Annan, establish a trail following an historic lade, and to manage and improve access and amenity of woodlands around Lochmaben Castle are also underway. In addition, working with the National Scenic Area Officer has also been very productive. An evocative but collapsing 17th century ruined lesser laird's house at Gutchers' Isle on the coast has been stabilised and continues to add interest to this well trodden path.

The Archaeology Service continues to act as a local hub for the provision of information and advice to a variety of users, from developers to local heritage groups pursuing community projects, to researchers requesting specific information on the region's archaeology. Meeting these varied needs is ensuring the long term care of the historic environment, and all that it contributes to our wellbeing.

Jane Brann

Archaeologist, Dumfries and Galloway Council



Glenstocken at Gutchers' Isle, Colvend, before and after repair works (© Dumfries and Galloway Council).

Carpow Logboat: National Level Research Led by Local Level Partnership in Perth and Kinross

In addition to its curatorial role with respect to developer-funded archaeology in Perth and Kinross, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust's (PKHT) archaeological remit extends to both the provision of grants and developing in-house research projects. The latter are driven by opportunities and/or threats, where there is also no commercial or management-based funding solution.

The discovery of a logboat on inter-tidal mudflats in the Tay estuary instigated a programme of monitoring and assessment which showed the boat to be around 9m in length, made of oak and of Late Bronze Age date. Significantly, while the exposed bow was rapidly eroding as a result of inter-tidal action, the buried portion was remarkably well-preserved, including prehistoric woodworking and an in-situ transom at the stern. In the summer of 2006 the boat was fully excavated and recovered in a project led by PKHT, and carried out in partnership with Historic Scotland, the National Museums of Scotland and CFA Archaeology Ltd. The project was a major logistical challenge, involving inter-tidal excavation, raising the boat using air floats in a flood tide, towing the recovered vessel 15 km along the Tay estuary, and lifting the boat in a custom-built frame from the river onto land transport.

Over the last three years the logboat has been undergoing conservation work at the National Museums of Scotland where detailed studies have been carried out. A one-day conference held in September 2007 drew together the varied streams of research which also provided a cultural and environmental context for the find. These will feature in the forthcoming publication. Once conserved, the logboat will return to Perth & Kinross to be displayed at Perth Museum and Art Gallery.

David Strachan

Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust

www.pkht.org.uk

The stern of the 3,000 year old Carpow logboat prior to conservation treatment at the National Museums of Scotland (© PKHT).



East Lothian Archaeology Week (ELAW)

Although the brunt of the work of the East Lothian Council Archaeology Service comprises giving archaeological information and advice in relation to development and land management issues, the Service is also committed to raising archaeological awareness, promoting some of the lesser known sites of the county and, basically, encouraging more folk to get involved with the heritage on their doorstep.

Since the establishment of the Archaeology Service in 2002, an annual Archaeology Week has been organised to coincide with Scottish Archaeology Month. Starting with only about ten events back in 2002, by 2007 ELAW had over 40 events and over 1500 people attending. This is largely due to the dedication and support of a number of local history societies who have been steadily contributing more and more events each year and to other Council departments who have been increasingly getting involved.

ELAW's success is largely due to its local focus and involvement, introducing people from East Lothian and neighbouring counties to the fantastic heritage that can be found all around them. Although not recognised as a major tourism event, it does contribute to the wider socio-economic and tourism objectives of the county in many ways. It helps to attract more people to visit the area (in especially lesser visited areas of the county and those parts of East Lothian off the beaten track); it attempts to inspire people to get out and about and explore the countryside; it encourages people to get involved in heritage projects; and importantly, it attempts to help communities and individuals develop a sense of ownership and local pride.

Biddy Simpson

East Lothian Council

www.eastlothian.gov.uk/archaeology



East Lothian Archaeology Week Open Day, Dunbar Vaults (@East Lothian Council).

City of Edinburgh Council and Cramond

2009 will see the completion of the first phase of conservation and interpretation work at Cramond. The Cramond Management Group was set up in 2002 in response to a petition to the Scottish Parliament, which expressed concerns about conservation of Roman Fort at Cramond. It is a partnership between City of Edinburgh Council (including City's Archaeology Service and Parks Unit), local landowners, Historic Scotland, community representatives, and Edinburgh Archaeological Field Society. Work to date has focussed on the implementation of the Council's 2003 Historic Cramond Conservation, Interpretation and Management Plan.

Phase 1 concentrated on a 2-month community excavation by the Archaeology Service, Cramond Heritage Trust, AOC Archaeology Group and EAFS with support from the National Museums of Scotland. The excavation saw over 65 volunteers aged 6-80+ taking part in the excavation of the remains of two Roman barrack blocks/workshops, a granary building and the eastern entrance to the fort. Highlights of the excavation included the recovery of a series of metal finds, including two Roman coins and a bronze urn, new evidence for the development of the fort and an unknown extension to the medieval graveyard. Additional sections of the barracks/workshops stone walls will be consolidated this summer to better aid the public's enjoyment and understanding of the site. The excavations were open to the public throughout, with over two thousand visitors attracted to the area, including 600 visitors during an open weekend organised as part of Scottish Archaeology Month, as well as school visits. As a direct result of this project the CECAS and the Cramond Association have witnessed a welcome and real increase in interest from local residents in the care of the local area and in particular the areas important archaeological heritage. It is hoped that this renewed interest will help the group in taking forward the ultimate aim of the project, to create a new education centre and museum centred on the fort and its former bathhouse, to house the large quantity of archaeological artefacts which have been discovered in the area.

John Lawson
City of Edinburgh Council



Members of the local community and EAFS being filmed by STV News while excavating the 3rd century workshops at Cramond Roman Fort (© CECAS).

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar: Our Past, Our Service



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Archaeology Service maintains the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for the Outer Hebrides, the Western Isles of Scotland. This is an archipelago of 12 occupied and many, many more now unoccupied islands, with a declining and aging population of c. 26,000. Here limited private development and civic works are a secondary threat to the archaeology, in comparison to the rising sea levels and storminess which erode the coastlines each year, exposing and destroying archaeology.

The role of the archaeology service is therefore multiple – the SMR is maintained and developed as much to inform the community, and to encourage economic development, as to inform planning advice. Over the 10 years since the establishment of the service, the financial turnover of archaeology to the islands has risen from an estimated c. £25,000 pa to c. £350,000 pa, and during this period the population of professional archaeologists on the island has risen from 0 to 7, supporting 6 households. Community projects have started, with 6 community-led projects actively researching in the islands during the last 2 years, and the foundation of three archaeology groups. As a result of all this activity, the number of recorded monuments has risen from c. 4000 in 1998 to nearly 14,000 today, with many new finds reported by local people.

In an area where history is largely unwritten, and the past has produced a distinctive local culture, the Archaeology Service has an important role in reinforcing the value and importance of the past, as a sustainable cultural and economic resource.

Mary Macleod

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

www.cne-siar.gov.uk/archaeology/



North Uist Archaeology Group examining a coastal erosion site on Baile Sear (© CnES Archaeology Service).

Stirling: Year of the Carved Stone

The importance of having a local contact who can respond promptly to reports of new discoveries was highlighted this year by the addition of information on a number of new carved stones from the Stirling Council area to the Stirling & Clackmannan Sites and Monuments Record. These cases have reinforced the need not only for accurate and up to date on-line data, which can be accessed from anywhere in the world, but for access to and availability of a source of archaeological information and advice with local knowledge and contacts. It should be noted that there is no archaeologist in the museum service in Stirling. All the finders seemed very happy to have their finds visited and/or investigated by someone with local knowledge but with access to wider expertise.

In the first example, much additional information on the date stone of 1666, originally from a dormer pediment but discovered by roadmen in the course of unblocking a culvert, was provided to the SMR through both the Council's Archives Service and the Local History Officer which was supplemented by research from a very helpful locally-based professional historian. In the second example, an early medieval carved cross, dating confirmation and information on other Scottish parallels was sought and provided by the RCAHMS in Edinburgh. In the case of the third example, a mortar or knocking stone from Brig o' Turk, the SMR was able to supply information on other local parallels not recorded elsewhere. All in all it was a good year for carved stones and the SMR in Stirling.

Lorna Main

Stirling Council

www.stirling.gov.uk/index/services/planning/archaeology



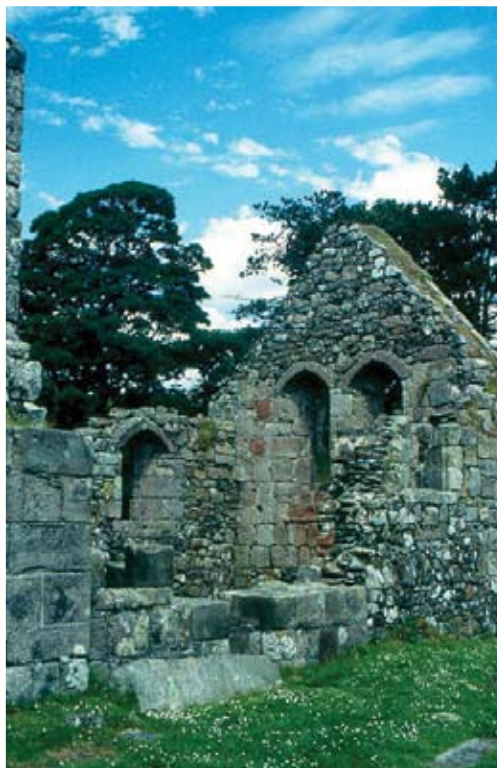
Discovering Bute

The West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) is sometimes asked to provide specialist input to community projects at an early stage when funds to employ commercial archaeological consultants are lacking, as applications for grant aid have not yet been made. Early advice from the Service allows the archaeological components of projects to be scoped and taken forward to a grant application stage. One such project for which WoSAS played a small, but significant early role, is Discover Bute for which the Heritage Lottery Fund granted £1.787 million in 2008 to the Bute Conservation Trust. Discover Bute is a four-year Landscape Partnership Project to be delivered across rural Bute. The project aims to involve local people in landscape and heritage conservation and through this to boost tourism and the economy on Bute. WoSAS provided expert assistance to the Discover Bute Project Manager to enable her to procure suitable consultants to work up the detailed archaeological proposals for the Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund application. This assistance included the preparation of suitable contract documents and assistance with the tendering process. The many landscape and heritage project proposals of Discover Bute include the rebuilding of over 100km of dry stone walls, consolidation of archaeological remains, interpretation and events on site and a £268,000 training programme. A project archaeologist has been employed and started work at the beginning of 2009. WoSAS hopes to play a further role in this important project through close liaison with the project archaeologist. A new web site for the project is in process of development at <http://www.discoverbute.com/>

Carol Swanson

West of Scotland Archaeology Service

www.wosas.net/



View looking north-east over the ruins of the east end of St. Blane's Church, Bute (© WoSAS).

Shetland's Past

People in Shetland have always been enthusiastic and interested in their own past. As an island community, the past is a constituent part of people's identity. The Sites and Monuments Record (a record of all the sites in Shetland) was set up in 1986, with the appointment of the "Shetland Archaeologist" through Shetland Amenity Trust. This is a charitable trust which provides the archaeological aspect of Development Control to the Planning Service of Shetland Islands Council.

Of course it is impossible to create a definitive record of ALL the sites in an area because more are constantly being discovered. People frequently report new discoveries to us which they have observed on their croft or walking in the hills or come into the office to find out more about the "lumps and bumps" which they have encountered. In 2000 the Archaeology Section of the Trust started a project called "Shetland's Past". The aim was to channel the interest and enthusiasm of these folk and also the many History Groups so that they could make good records of their discoveries which would form the basis of robust SMR entries. We wrote a manual, provided record cards and in some cases ranging rods and tapes, and, in the days before digital photography became popular, film as well. People and groups have dipped in and out of the project as time and circumstances have permitted. As a result, many hundreds of sites have been added to the record – sites which the professional team may never have had the time and resources to go out and find without local help.

Val Turner

Shetland Amenity Trust

www.shetland-heritage.co.uk/amenitytrust



Shetland's Past volunteers at Belmont (©Shetland Amenity Trust).

One Stop Archaeology Shop in Aberdeen



Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit is relatively unusual in that it fulfils the role of the local authority archaeological curator, but is based within the City Council's Museums and Galleries service, where staff also look after the City's nationally significant archaeological and numismatic collections. This arrangement appears to work well within a small geographical area, allowing the public to focus on what is effectively a 'one-stop archaeology shop'. Excavation and building survey work is also undertaken, including the highly-productive 2006 St Nicholas Church dig, highlighted on the city council's webpages, and in 2008-9 work associated with refurbishment of historic Marischal College as Aberdeen City Council HQ.



Aberdeen's Sites and Monuments Record, inherited from Grampian Regional Council at local government re-organisation in 1996, now has details of more than 3,500 sites, ranging in date from 10,000 BC to the 1960s AD. With financial support from Historic Scotland, at least a third of it has recently been rewritten following new historical and archaeological research, and is now on-line with images and mapping. It is significant that staff members include a historian, illustrator and photographers. Their work is essential to every aspect of the Archaeological Unit's function, while they also work across the museums and galleries spectrum in several ways. Our roles include the production of trail leaflets, information panels, commemorative plaques, guided walks, education projects, research for and organisation of historical re-enactments - and most recently the facilitation of paranormal investigations within the Tolbooth Museum, Aberdeen's 17th-century prison, which the Unit also manages.



Judith Stones
Aberdeen City Council,
Museums and Galleries
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

Re-enactment in the Tolbooth Museum and (inset) an artist's impression, by Jan Dunbar, of the Justice Port in the late 16th century, with severed heads on display (© Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Collections).

ALGAO:Scotland Membership

The ALGAO:Scotland committee (as per April 2009):

Chair

John Lawson, City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service

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Vice-Chair

Lorna Main, Stirling Council

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David Strachan, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust

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Biddy Simpson, East Lothian Council

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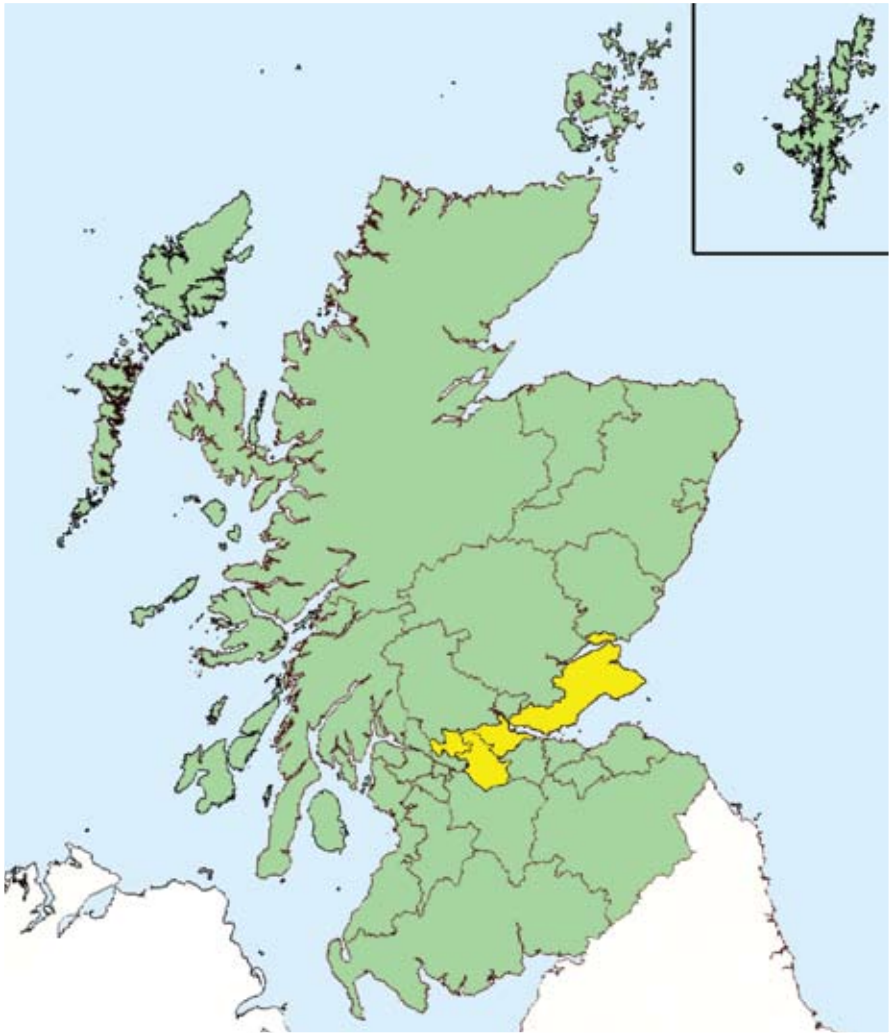
admin@algao.org.uk

ALGAO:Scotland welcomes financial support from Historic Scotland to help us meet common objectives in the conservation, management and promotion of the historic environment.

General enquiries to the Association should be directed in the first instance to the administrative assistant, Caroline Ingle at: admin@algao.org.uk

Editor

David Strachan, Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust



Scottish local authority areas covered by ALGAO:Scotland members (green) and areas with no ALGAO:Scotland representation (yellow).

*Back Cover Images: This crop mark (below) probably represents the remains of a small Iron Age settlement just on the edge of Marykirk. Although this area has been flown over many times it has never been visible before (© Aberdeenshire Council).
Marischal College excavations 2008 – late medieval pots in small pit (© Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Collections).*

